

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

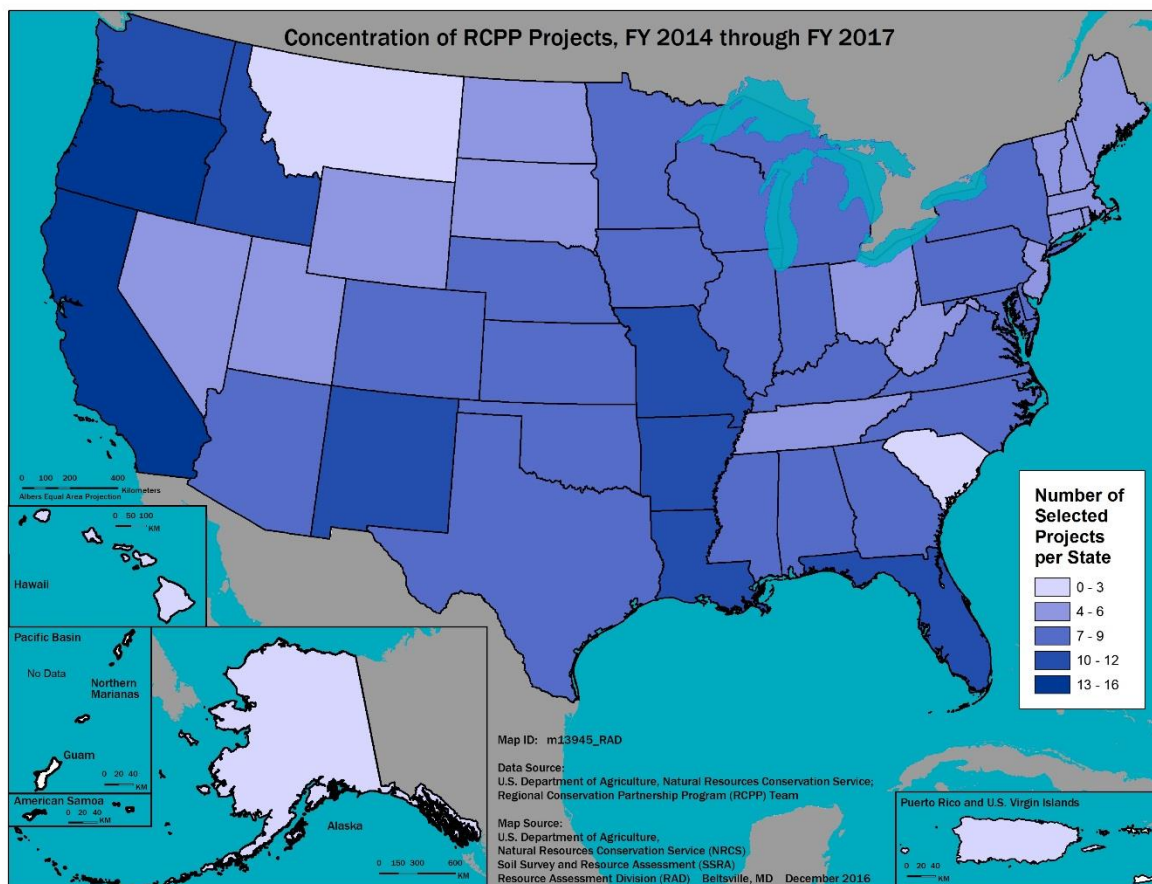
Investing in Colorado



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program

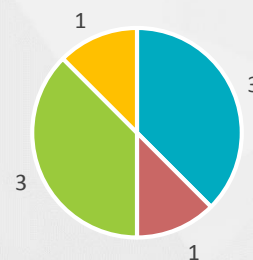
Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrates the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2017, NRCS is investing up to \$225 million in 88 projects that impact nearly every state in the nation, including three in Colorado. Since 2014, NRCS has invested more than \$825 million in 286 high-impact projects, bringing together more than 2,000 conservation partners who have invested an additional \$1.4 billion. By 2018, NRCS and partners will have invested at least \$2.4 billion. These projects are leading to cleaner and more abundant water, better soil and air quality, enhance wildlife habitat, more resilient and productive agricultural lands and stronger rural economies.



### Colorado Projects to Date

#### Projects by Resource Concern



- Water Quantity/Drought
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Habitat
- Air Quality

8

Projects

**\$26.6 million**

NRCS Investment

95

Partners

## Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	Agate Prairie Conservation Legacy	State	Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust	4	\$2.4 million
2016	Colorado Dairy and Irrigation Efficiency Program	State	Colorado Energy Office	8	\$1.1 million
2016	Greater Outcomes for Greater Sage-Grouse	National	Partners for Western Conservation	6	\$1.9 million
2014/2015	Modernizing Agricultural Water Management in the Lower Gunnison River Basin: A Cooperative Approach to Increased Water Use Efficiency and Water Quality Improvement	CCA	Colorado River Water Conservation District	31	\$8 million
2014/2015	Colorado Pressurized Irrigation Small Hydropower Partnership Project	State	Colorado Department of Agriculture	13	\$1.8 million

## 2017 RCPP Projects

### Colorado River Headwaters Project

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$7,758,830 (Critical Conservation Area – Colorado River Basin)

Lead Partner: Trout Unlimited

Number of Initial Partners: 9

Participating States: Colorado (Lead State)

The Colorado River Headwaters Projects will address the consequences of trans-mountain diversions that supply agricultural and municipal water to Northern Colorado and the Denver Metro Area, which have had a significant impact on agriculture and aquatic resources in the headwaters of the Colorado River. Led by an array of partners representing local agriculture, local government, water providers, state agencies, conservation groups and landowners, the project will create a bypass channel to reconnect the Colorado River, make channel and habitat improvement downstream of the bypass to support healthy habitat, and improve irrigation, soil quality and water quality. When fully implemented, the Headwaters Project will directly benefit over 30 miles of the Colorado River and 4,500 acres of irrigated lands that provide sage grouse habitat and make up to 11,000 acre-feet of water available to improve the river during low flow conditions.



## Building Resiliency in the San Juan-Rio Chama Region

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$3,250,000 (National)

Lead Partner: East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District

Number of Initial Partners: 21

Participating States: Colorado and New Mexico (Lead State)

Completed by the Bureau of Reclamation in 1976, the San Juan-Rio Chama Diversion is a series of diversion structures and tunnels that together carry runoff 26 miles across the Continental Divide from the Colorado River watershed to the Rio Chama, in the Rio Grande watershed. This diversion, along with the Rio Chama, provides approximately one third of New Mexico's water supply for irrigators, agriculture, industry, communities and fish and wildlife. The Building Resiliency in the San Juan-Rio Chama Region project, managed by East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District and twenty partners, will complement recent diversion structures with additional forest health and watershed treatments to increase the resiliency of the landscape to withstand stressors such as drought, wildfire and climate change in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Between 2017 and 2021, partners in the San Juan–Rio Chama region of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico will complete 1,000 – 1,500 acres of watershed resiliency treatments per year utilizing \$6.4 million of Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program and the Agricultural Easement Program.

## Colorado Rio Grande Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$345,000 (State)

Lead Partner: Subdistrict #1 Rio Grande Water Conservation District

Number of Initial Partners: 3

Participating States: Colorado (Lead State)

The Colorado Rio Grande project will encourage landowners to participate in voluntary conservation practices for water and soil health. To address issues of drought, the partnership project will share irrigated water management practices, such as weather stations and soil moisture monitoring systems, with the public. Soil health practices will be applied on irrigated cropland to reduce water consumption, reduce soil erosion, enhance soil health and improve soil moisture retention qualities. The application of these practices will reduce energy consumption and contribute to increased stream flows and improved riparian habitat.